



One in four principals threatened on the job

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ALMOST one in four principals have been threatened by a parent or student, with calls for an independent authority to be formed to investigate the abuse.

Parents are the most likely perpetrators, with the rate increasing from 19 per cent in 2011 to 25 per cent in 2014, according to Australian Catholic University research.

Threats from students increased from 17 per cent in 2011 to 24 per cent in 2014.

Report author ACU Associate Professor Philip Riley said the survey showed the personal cost of running schools across the state, Catholic and Independent sectors, was increasingly high.

"The high emotional demands these school leaders face, together with a lack of systemic support and training, means we see higher levels of burnout and stress," he said.

"The numbers now show it is to do with the role rather than the people."

Prof Riley said an independent authority should be set up to address increasing bullying and violence.

Queensland Teachers Union president Kevin Bates said the issue had been building over a number of years, including face-to-face and social media incidences.

"In my view it's fast approaching a time when we need to have a conversation with parents and the community about how we can protect our principals to ensure they aren't being subject-

ed to these threats or violence," he said.

Queensland Secondary Principals Association chairman Andrew Pierpoint said any data that showed an increase in threats towards education staff was a concern.

"I think violence in all its forms, including physical and verbal violence, is on the increase across society ... and schools are part of that society," he said.

Queensland Association of State School Principals service officer Earle Taylor said he had been on the frontline of threats during his time as a school principal and it was important that they report any threats so they could be properly supported.